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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2013 Volume II: Immigration and Migration and the Making of a Modern American City

A Modern American Family: Creating a Historical Record in the Middle-School Social Studies Classroom

Guide for Curriculum Unit 13.02.04

by Tara L. Ehler

This unit will ask 8th-grade students to write the story of an American family through "primary" documents. That is, to create newspaper articles, journal entries, photographs, drawings and letters in order to tell the story of a modern family in New York. This collection will have to touch upon three themes of American history: conflict, class, and migration. For each of their five artifacts, students will have to write a "secondary" document that explains the context of the item.

(Recommended for U.S. History, grades 8-12)

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